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SUBJECT: Kabila breaks silence with call for national
unity in the face of escalating war in east
and a promise to quickly name a new PM

¶1. (U) In a late evening national television speech on October 9, President Joseph Kabila appealed to the nation to mobilize in support of the armed forces and elected government. The appeal came in the context of renewed conflict in the eastern Congo, deteriorating regional relations, and the anticipated formation of a new national government following the September 25 resignation of Prime Minister Antoine Gizenga.

¶2. (U) Kabila stressed the following points:

- the challenge of renewed fighting in North Kivu and Ituri;
- the importance of national unity and government institutions to preserve national territorial integrity and stability;
- the Amani Program, as the only framework to achieve a negotiated peace settlement;
- the role of the international community in maintaining peace and stability in the DRC;
- the commitment of the DRC to regional stability; and
- the challenges facing the new Prime Minister and government.

¶3. (U) Kabila referenced "foreign forces" that are supporting domestic armed groups that challenge Congolese state authority but did not mention a foreign nation by name. He maintained that the GDRC's pursuit of a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the east reflected wisdom, rather than weakness, on the part of the GDRC.

¶4. (U) Stating that "the hour was grave," Kabila made a call for the country to unite, across all political divides, to support the armed forces and elected government to preserve the peace, stability, and territorial integrity of the DRC. He made a specific call to Parliament and provincial governments to show a unity of purpose.

¶5. (U) Kabila called on the international community to preserve its credibility as a peacekeeping and stabilization force in the DRC and noted that the Amani Program, representing the consensus reached by the signatories, is the only mechanism to settle the conflict in the east.

¶6. (U) Turning to regional relations, Kabila stressed the intention of the DRC to cooperate with its neighbors, but without submitting to blackmail tactics or threats to its security. He added that the respect of international rules and recognition of national interests are essential to peaceful relations.

¶7. (U) Kabila paid homage to former Prime Minister Antoine Gizenga and indicated that the appointment of a new Prime Minister would occur "within hours." (Note: No announcement had been made as of

4:00 pm October 10. End note.) He said the priorities facing Gizenga's successor would be to end insecurity and establish state authority in the east. Kabila said he will make all political, diplomatic and military resources available for these priorities. He also stressed the importance of progress on the government's five development priorities ("cinq chantiers" in French) -- health, infrastructure, education, employment, and water/electricity provision. Kabila added that progress would require emphasis on reform of the security, justice, mining and petroleum sectors, as well as improved management of state finances. He added that the process of decentralization is the "cornerstone" of efficient local governance.

18. (SBU) Comment: The timing of the speech comes as no surprise, as silence during the two-week gap in naming a successor to Gizenga and a recent escalation in the conflict in the east have created the impression of a disinterested presidency. The not-so-veiled references to the DRC's neighbor were not unexpected, given GDRC belief that Kigali is actively supporting the CNDP. The lofty tone, elegant language and heavy substance of the speech presented Kabila as a man in charge, determined to present forcefully the government's preference for dialogue instead of a military solution as a deliberate choice. End Comment.

19. (U) Unofficial translation of the Kabila speech follows:

Begin unofficial translation:

My dear compatriots,

Once again, our country is at a turning point in its history (...)

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Indeed, while we believed the page of wars and rebellions turned once and for all, noises of boots and guns have begun to be heard again in the North Kivu province since August 28, making echoes lately even in recently pacified Ituri.

Native sons, serving foreign forces as invisible as they are obscure, have again chosen to spill the blood of their brothers and sisters. Breaking their word, they have violated the Goma Accord and all other commitments they had freely entered into never again to resort to arms as a means of settling conflicts.

Originally hidden, the true intentions of these enemies of peace and of their sponsors have just been exposed. It is neither more nor less than to plunge us again into uncertainty for our future, to challenge the will of the primary authority as expressed in the Constitution of February 26 and during the recent presidential, legislative and provincial elections. It is therefore a challenge to the Congolese people and their legitimate institutions. And this is unacceptable.

And we have a patriotic duty to oppose it with all our might. In this regard, I would like on your behalf to congratulate the Armed Forces of the Republic of the Congo. Despite their youth and the hazards of an unconventional war, they have generally resisted the attacks of the enemy with bravery.

They deserve to be honored by our nation and have demonstrated that it is not out of weakness, but out of wisdom that the Government of the Republic favors dialogue and conciliation in its search for a solution to the crisis in the eastern part of our country.

I also encourage them to continue their heroic resistance and I assure them of the unwavering support of sixty million Congolese, who are and always will be their sure, faithful and irreducible support.

My dear compatriots,

The hour is grave. And each and every one of us is therefore involved. Yesterday, by your patriotism, you thwarted the plans of those who dream of the balkanization and the submission of our country. I urge you, however, to remain steadfast in your

vigilance, because the revival of the Democratic Republic of Congo threatens many interests, fuels desires, and instigates conspiracy and aggression. Beyond all political divides, let us rally as one man behind our armed forces and our elected government to preserve our hard-won peace, safeguard the hard-earned reunification of our country, discourage any attempt to undermine the integrity of our national territory, and ensure the stability of our newly established institutions.

In this context, I appeal to the responsibility of the National Assembly and Senate, as well as executive and provincial legislative bodies. The cause of Congo must not be the subject of wrangling, its defense cannot accommodate nuances and ambiguities. It is in presenting a united front that we will prevail.

To all the lost sheep, I make a new appeal to reason. The Amani Program, the result of a consensus reached at the Goma conference, remains the only framework for settling claims. It is in terms of their involvement in implementing this program that the Nation will judge them.

To the international community, I reiterate our gratitude for their multifaceted assistance. I remind them that their credibility as keepers of peace and international stability is threatened by the continuing conflict prevailing in the east of our country.

I therefore invite them to be vigilant that all comply strictly with the principles of peaceful coexistence between peoples and to adjust their intervention mechanisms on the ground to the demands of justice and efficiency.

As for the Democratic Republic of Congo, I reaffirm that as a responsible member of this community, it is determined to cooperate with all countries in the world, particularly its neighbors, in respect to the principles of good neighborliness and without blackmail.

Between States, mutual respect and international rules, the sanctity and dignity of persons, and taking into account the rights and vital interests of the parties are, indeed, indispensable conditions of peace and stability. These conditions determine the quality of

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relationships, and recognizing this is the beginning of the solution to the deficit of trust and the recurring conflicts in our sub-region.

My dear compatriots,

I cannot conclude this address without mentioning the recent resignation of the Prime Minister and paying a deserved tribute at this monument in our history. For fifty years he has shown remarkable constancy and fought the good fights, for the independence of our country and the sovereignty of our people.

In the next few hours, I will appoint a new Prime Minister and task him with forming a government with a mission.

In the face of our current challenges, I expect the new Government's first priority to be to stop any residual pockets of insecurity in the east of the country and to restore State authority across the national territory. To this end, all the political, diplomatic and military resources of the Republic will be mobilized.

I expect the new Government to work tirelessly to speed up the work of the Five Development Priorities of the Republic, drawing on financial resources and equipment already mobilized. It must therefore quickly provide adequate solutions to people's expectations in terms of improving salaries and living conditions, and produce results on the ground, measured in numbers of standpipes, power plants, new schools, hospitals, and kilometers of roads built and put into service. It must also continue and implement reforms in several vital areas, and successfully implement the economic program established with our country's development partners. Achieving this goal is necessary for us to obtain a substantial reduction of our debt, thus releasing substantial

financial resources to the social component of government action.

In this context, the most urgent reforms involve security, justice, government accounting and the mining and hydrocarbon sectors. They also involve developing the private sector, to support the decisions of the last economic forum, and the agricultural sector, to guard against the food crisis. They also involve the great decentralization project, the cornerstone of good grassroots governance, synonymous with efficiency. To be successful, the implementation of decentralization requires a great deal of wisdom and a heightened sense of the consequences.

The new government is therefore obliged to act in depth and with urgency. Time is limited. There is no room for mistakes. Success depends on the collaboration of all institutions of the Republic and beyond that, on the help of the Congolese people. It is indeed ultimately the duty of the Congolese people to defend and rebuild our country.

I have no doubt that our cause being just, with our people fully mobilized, we will win both battles.

Long live the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thank you.

End unofficial translation.

BROCK